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Lorelei Louise Norvell (1943 – 2023)

Dr. Lorelei L. Norvell, the Editor-in-Chief of **Mycotaxon** (Vols. 89–137 [2004–22]) for the past 20 years, passed away 4 August 2023, at her home in Portland, Oregon, following a prolonged battle with cancer. Lorelei dedicated her last few months to finalizing two delayed issues of the 2022 volume of the journal thus closing a significant chapter in the journal's history. Fittingly, the final issue, which was partly edited by Lorelei, is dedicated to her memory.

Lorelei took over the editorship of **Mycotaxon** from Dr. Pavel Lizoň in 2003 and helped guide the journal through a transformative modernization to digital, online publication. Lorelei used her language and editorial skills to help non-English speaking authors by improving their English and resolving complex sentence structures for authors not writing in their first language. This was highly appreciated by hundreds of contributors. She did this by drawing upon her understanding of both mycology and the nuances of linguistics. Before becoming a mycologist, Lorelei had studied several modern languages at Knox College, graduating with an A.B. in Germanic languages from Knox College (Phi Beta Kappa and magna cum laude) in 1964, and Russian, Serbo-Croatian,

and other Slavic languages (obtaining an MA from the University of Texas at Austin in 1969). She was at ease in languages such as German, the ancestral tongue of her father, French, and Russian among others. She developed a significant Russian mycological literature library. Lorelei had great patience and was generous, one could say overly generous, with time spent assisting new scientists and new authors. Additionally, she understood the complexity of the **International Code of Nomenclature for algae, fungi, and plants**, and until her death served on the Nomenclature Committee for Fungi, including being its Secretary from 2008–13. Lorelei developed a close working relationship with Dr. Shaun Pennycook, who was appointed as Nomenclature Editor of **Mycotaxon** in 2005 to lighten her workload. Lorelei was foremost a team player and enthusiastic promoter of science at the local, regional, and global levels.

There is no doubt that Lorelei Norvell was an exceptional and extremely bright child and stood out academically at an early age. As an only child she grew up being doted upon by her parents, David and Betty Lehwalder. Born in Oakland, California, the family moved repeatedly, and her schooling shifted in synch with the career of her father, a chemist in the oil industry, from Oakland, CA, to Houston, TX, where she first appeared in the news (**Houston Chronicle**) as an eager 10 year old student in 1953 boarding a school bus, then Edwardsville, IL, and finally, Roxana, IL where she completed high school as class valedictorian, summa cum laude. Next Lorelei obtained her first graduate degree, an A.B. from Knox College, Galesburg, IL in 1964. Each summer was spent in Montana primarily with her mother and relatives where she developed a keen interest in nature.

Lorelei married her late husband G. Todd Norvell in 1964. Todd served in the compulsory Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC), became a Distinguished Military Graduate, and subsequently entered the U.S. Army later that year as the Vietnam War effort draft ramped up. Following his career path, Lorelei and Todd first moved to Columbus, GA near Fort Benning (now Fort Moore), then to Killeen, TX near Fort Hood, and during his meritorious overseas deployment and training at Fort Holabird, MD, Lorelei moved to Godfrey, IL near her childhood town of Roxana, to enter the Southern Illinois University Edwardsville, where she obtained her high school teacher accreditation. She had an insatiable appetite for education. Following Todd's return they moved to Austin, TX so that he could enroll in the University of Texas Law School. There she continued her education at the same university, this time in languages and with summers spent at the Russian Summer Institute in Lawrence, KS,

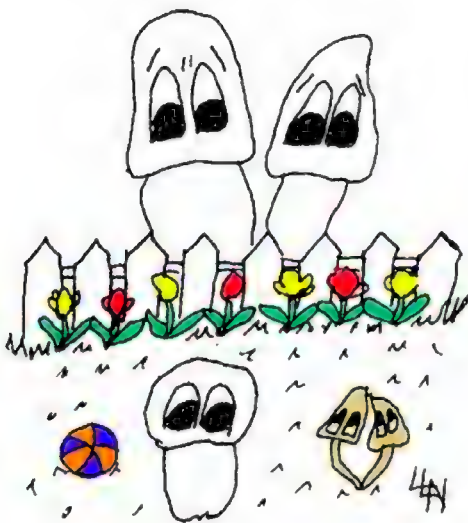
graduating in 1969. The couple next moved to Denver, CO where Todd clerked at a Denver law firm, and soon after they moved to Portland, OR, where Todd joined a prestigious law firm.

Having settled in Oregon, Todd rose in the ranks to become a senior partner, and they designed and built a spectacularly unique house later featured in the local **Sunset Magazine**. Lorelei started a leaded glass studio in their home in 1970 that was featured in **The Oregonian** newspaper that in 1975 billed her as a ‘dilettante’ stained-glass artist.

Following the birth of their son, Forrest, in 1972, Lorelei became interested in mushrooms and joined the Oregon Mycological Society (OMS) marking a turning point in her life. By 1975 she had become the President of OMS and had begun a comprehensive file on all Oregon and Pacific Northwest (PNW) mushrooms. Following the birth of their second son, Owen in 1978, Lorelei was elected chair of the Skyline School Local School Advisory Committee. In 1980 they experience the eruption of Mt. St. Helen’s in nearby Washington state, which covered Portland and their home in volcanic ash.



one of Lorelei’s botanical stained glass windows



The Ipecac Crew

from “Poisonings I have Known”
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Mushrooming*: Autumn 1986 4(4)

Beginning in 1983 Lorelei began publishing a 14 year long run of humorous, educational articles, each illustrated by her uniquely whimsical, big-eyed mushroom cartoon characters. She often would sign L³N which stood for L- cubed or LLLN, as she was proud of her birth name ‘Lehwalder’ combined with her given names Lorelei Louise.

By 1986 she was again President of OMS, Chair of the OMS toxicology committee, and one of the most knowledgeable amateur mycologists in the PNW. Also in 1986, the OMS with Lorelei Norvell being a major participant, initiated the Oregon *Cantharellus* Study Project, which was to last for 10 years. Contemporaneously with her interest in fungi and stained glass she became serious about the game Scrabble, eventually entering competitive Scrabble and ultimately competing in the annual Scrabble

Open in Las Vegas around 1987. She and Todd, both being gifted individuals, also took up the guitar, continually competing with one another to be the best.



Joe Ammirati (professor) and Lorelei Norvell (student) in Joe's office, University of Washington about 1994 (photo by S.A. Redhead)

Having met several prominent professional mycologists through her involvement with the OMS and the PNW mushroom Key Council, Lorelei, then the Vice President, later (1988) President, approached J. Ammirati in 1987, to explore the possibility of studying for a doctorate in mycology at the University of Washington. She was told that she needed a Bachelor's degree in science to pursue the program so she promptly enrolled in Portland State University and earned a B.Sc. in botany (1990). Nothing was going to stand in her way! Lorelei then embarked on an 8-year long quest driving and living off and on campus between her home in Portland, OR and the University of Washington, Seattle, ultimately graduating in 1998 with a Ph.D. in mycology.

Lorelei at first focussed on the genus *Inocybe*, which had been studied by Dr. Dan Stuntz in Seattle, and she attended the 1990 North American Mycological Association (NAMA) foray in Whistler, BC, Canada, with Joe Ammirati where they met Scott Redhead who recently had published on *Phaeocollybia* in eastern Canada. Norvell and Redhead crossed paths again in 1991 at the Mycological Society of America (MSA) meeting in San Antonio, TX where she presented the OMS poster on the chanterelle project. Enter



Foray in British Columbia in 1991. Left to right: Shamin Gamiet, Andy MacKinnon, Shannon Berch, Lorelei Norvell, John Dennis, Brenda Callan, Paul Kroeger (photo by S.A. Redhead)



Lorelei and Scott Redhead in front of Scott's poster at the 5th International Mycological Congress, Vancouver, B.C., August, 1994

Sharmin Gamiet, who became a fellow student with Lorelei at UW in Seattle, and Shannon Berch from BC; knowing of Scott's interest in *Phaeocollybia*, Sharmin and Lorelei suggested that he attend the Foray of Western Mycologists (FOAM) that year on the Olympic Peninsula, since *Phaeocollybia* was far more common in old growth rains forests of the PNW than elsewhere in North

America. Several species of *Phaeocollybia* were found during FOAM, which prompted an impromptu decision by Sharmin to invite Lorelei to accompany Scott to her old growth Douglas Fir plots with a group of mycologists including Andy MacKinnon from Vancouver Island. In turn, Andy arranged that they immediately visit the lower Carmanah Valley on Vancouver Island, BC, via logging roads as it harboured some of Canada's oldest endangered conifer forests. *Phaeocollybia* had never been collected in BC previously, and they knew



Lorelei Norvell holding the first field find of an unnamed species, now *Phaeocollybia redheadii*, October 1991 in the old growth forests of the Carmanah Valley, Vancouver Island, BC

that the genus was fruiting that week just south of the valley across the Strait of Juan de Fuca. The field trip was a success and resulted in the discovery of two species, new to both BC and Canada. She published a humorous account "A Canadian Odyssey" in *Mushroom* (Spring 1992 10(2): 9–12) [see https://www.researchgate.net/publication/317000857_The_Canadian_Odyssey-25_years_later_Search_for_the_elusive_Phaeocollybia].

From that point on Lorelei suggested to her professor Joe Ammirati that she study *Phaeocollybia* instead of *Inocybe*. Joe Ammirati recalling his professor, Alexander H. Smith's interest in *Phaeocollybia*, knowing that the PNW was a hot spot for the genus, and that its limited taxonomic scope suited a Ph.D. project, he approved and guided the study. Worried that there might be insufficient material to complete a study of *Phaeocollybia*, a two month long survey with George Barron and Scott Redhead along coastal BC, WA, OR and northern California was undertaken in 1992 which yielded many well documented, photographed collections and species, several new to science and proved that Lorelei had an eye for the genus. Joe ensured that Lorelei used one of the latest DNA tools of the day in taxonomy, that of Restriction Fragment Length Polymorphism (RFLP) analyses. Joe also arranged that her external examiner was renowned molecular guru, Dr. David Hibbett. This launched Lorelei's studies leading to her becoming a global expert on *Phaeocollybia* and the foremost authority of the genus in North America.

As a result of her posters and publications on chanterelles and *Phaeocollybia*, Lorelei was awarded an MSA Graduate Fellowship Award in 1993. Also coincidental with Lorelei's residency at the University of Washington, Joe Ammirati and other biologists in the PNW were canvassed in 1993 by the US government's Forest Ecosystem Management Assessment Team (FEMAT) under President Bill Clinton's plan to free up or mitigate timber harvesting in the PNW. Joe was asked for a list of species of fungi, especially suspected rare or endangered taxa known either to be restricted to or frequenting more commonly in old growth PNW forests. Fortuitously, among the taxa placed on the initial lists were the supposedly rare *Phaeocollybia* and the then mysterious *Cantharellus formosus*, both then actively studied by Lorelei, the first as part of her doctoral study and the latter involving the OMS chanterelle project. The significance of these taxa and the necessity to first survey fungal herbaria for data and then survey forests for them, helped launch Lorelei Norvell's family contract business, Pacific Northwest Mycology Service, LLC, guided by her husband's business acumen and her adult son, Forrest's, information technology

skills. Via this company, based in her home, rather than a university research laboratory, Lorelei would assist the USA and Oregon governments, and publish major mycological treatises.

Aware of her writing and linguistic skills, Lorelei was appointed Editor of *Inoculum*, the MSA newsletter, by MSA President Jim Ginns, for 4 years beginning in 1998. She also began contract work for the US and regional governments surveying PNW mushrooms for land surveys. Simultaneously, she coordinated the Great Smoky Mountain National Park All-Taxa Biological Inventory Fungal Taxonomic Working Group (TWIG) between 1999–2000 in North Carolina and Tennessee, working with Drs. Ron Petersen and Karen Hughes. She was elected Secretary of MSA in 2000, serving for 4 years.



Lorelei in her home office in October 1998 (photo by S.A. Redhead)

Surviving her first bout of ovarian cancer treatment in 2001, she then became Editor of **Mycotaxon** in 2003. Lorelei believed in supporting taxonomy and appreciated both classical field-based and modern cutting-edge systematics and wished to keep the journal relevant and available to the world. Her appointment initiated a decades long series of consulting monthly phone calls with **Mycotaxon** founding editor, Richard Korf up until his death, and with the late editor Grégoire Hennebert. Concurrent with her editorship she continued to publish on nomenclature, *Phaeocollybia*, chanterelles, PNW mushrooms, and was co-author on major phylogenetic studies.

Lorelei at times seemed to have boundless energy and a joie de vivre. Always cheerful and with a bouncy lilt to her voice. In 2005 she was awarded an MSA Fellowship for researchers in mid careers. She also was immersed in conducting field studies in Oregon with Ron Exeter, together and separately leading to joint publications. She loved nature, exploring the dripping wet west coast rainforests decked out in colourful rain gear.



Ron Exeter and Lorelei in Oregon survey plots sampling chanterelles (Ron) and *Phaeocollybia* (Lorelei)

At home she and Todd maintained a menagerie of cats and dog, and she placed many bird feeders and fed the gang of racoons that appeared regularly at her patio windows. Lorelei's cancer returned in 2012 and being a scientist herself, she began an extended series of treatments including experimental drugs, radiation, and immunotherapy, allowing the medical researchers to test several risky therapies. Shortly after the initial second diagnosis, she began relying more upon Shaun Pennycook to take on additional duties, including copy-editing so that she could concentrate most of her energies on her exceptional production-editing skills. She kept a group of her "specials" up to date via email on all the ups and downs and treatments in a light, humorous, almost suspense

novel dialogue with irony and cheer. One of her greatest joys was the birth of her grandson, Todd Porter Norvell (aka The GREAT grandkid!!), mentioned in many such emails with attached photos.



Lorelei and David Arora at a foray, about 1999 (photo by S.A. Redhead)



Lorelei and Paul Stamets at his business, Fungi Perfecti, in Olympia, WA in 1994
(photo by S.A. Rehead)

Ten years after the cancer's return, Lorelei was still managing the 2022 **Mycotaxon** but with failing energy levels leading to the delayed publication of volume 137(3) in March 2023, and to preliminary work on the current volume 137(4), posthumously completed by Shaun, with Noni Korf, eldest daughter of Richard P. Korf, taking



Lorelei and Shaun Pennycook at Edinburgh IMC 2010

over the production-editing role. Lorelei remained upbeat in an e-mail to Shaun and lengthy phone call with Scott only 2 days before her death. She often said she was born with a happy gene. She never gave up, as evident in an email in 2022, “I have two more issues to complete, after which I return to *Phaeocollybia* full time. (that’s the theory anyway!).”

Lorelei’s publications, both scientific and popular, are too numerous to list here and will be catalogued elsewhere. However, several are notable for their impact:

Norvell, L.L. 1995. Loving the chanterelle to death? The ten-year Oregon Chanterelle Project. **McIlvainea** 12(1): 6–26. [This was the culmination of a survey conducted by the OMS on the effects on commercial harvesting of *Cantharellus formosus*, the Pacific Golden chanterelle.]

Pilz, D., Norvell, L., Danell, E., Molina, R. 2003. **Ecology and Management of Commercially Harvested Chanterelle Mushrooms**. United States, Department of Agriculture, Forest Service Pacific Northwest Research Station General Technical Report PNW-GTR-576. 83 p

Exeter, R., Norvell, L.L., Cazares, E. 2006. ***Ramaria of the Pacific Northwest***. U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management, Salem District/WA/PT-06/050-1792. 157 p

Norvell, L.L., Exeter, R. 2008 ***Phaeocollybia of Pacific Northwest North America***, Salem, OR, U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management, Salem District. 229 p [This is a comprehensive all color guide with keys and full descriptions of 25 species.]

She anticipated her demise and over the past few years downloaded many of her publications onto Research Gate <https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Lorelei-Norvell>. Her son Forrest is maintaining her business's website that also contains a wealth of knowledge. <http://www.pnw-ms.com/home.html>

Lorelei Norvell authored 12 new species of *Phaeocollybia* (later synonymizing 4) and one new species each of edible PNW *Cantharellus* and *Hydnum*. She was co-author of the genus *Chromosera*, *Hygrophoraceae* subfamily *Hygrophoroideae* and tribe *Chromosereae*, and *Lichenomphalia* subg. *Protolichenomphalia*. She was honoured by the eponymous agaric genus *Loreleia* in 2002 and will be again soon by the yet unpublished name "*Chromosera loreleiae*".

Lorelei was interviewed regarding her life and career by Leon Shernoff, then editor of **Mushroom, the journal of Wild Mushrooming**, which was published in 4 parts, the first being "The Quest for *Phaeocollybia* (and much more)" and is available on line at <https://www.mushroomthejournal.com/lorelei-norvell-interview-part-1/>.

She lived a remarkable life and made a major and lasting impact on science and her community.

We thank Forrest Norvell for providing information on Lorelei's and Todd's lives and Owen Norvell for securing and transferring Lorelei's herbarium to Amy Rossman for eventual deposit in official herbaria.



Lorelei at a conference in the eastern U.S.A., about 2001, wearing her custom made, gold/stone inlayed *Phaeocollybia* pendant
(photo by S.A. Redhead)



The second 25 years of *Mycotaxon* covers, 1999-2023: volumes 70–137(4)